1: Thurston & Rangachari E,G-4,5 (no date) 1909
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181 the Nīlgiris writes to me that "though the average Badaga is thrifty and hard-working, there is a tendency for him to be lazy when he is sure of his meal. When a 514 person is sick in another village, his relatives make it an (241) excuse to go and see him, and they have to be fed. When the first crop is raised, the idler pretends that 'worms' have crept into the crop, and the gods have to 426 be propitiated, and there is a feast. Marriage or death, of course, draws a crowd to be fed or feasted. All this means extra expenditure, and a considerable drain on the slender income of the family. The Rowthan (Muhammadan merchant) from the Tamil country is near at hand to lend money, as he has carried his bazar to the very heart of the Badaga villages. First it is a bag of rāgi (food grain), a piece of cloth to throw on the coffin, or a few rupees worth of rice and curry-stuff doled out by the all-accommodating Rowthan at a price out of all proportion to the market rate, and at a rate ranging from six pies to two annas for the rupee. The ever impecunious Badaga has no means of extricating himself, with a slender income, which leaves no margin for redeeming debts. The bond is renewed every quarter or half year, and the debt grows by leaps and bounds, and consumes 691 all his earthly goods, including lands. The advent of lawyers on the hills has made the Badagas a most litigious people, and they resort to the courts, which means expenditure of money, and neglect of agriculture." In the funeral song of the Badagas, which has been translated by Mr. Gover,* one of the crimes enumerated, for which atonement must be made, is that of preferring a complaint to the Sirkar (Government), and one of their (538) numerous proverbs embodies the same idea. "If you

* Folk-songs of Southern India.

1: Thurston & Rangachari E,G-4,5 (no date) 1909
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691 (538) prefer a complaint to a Magistrate, it is as if you had put poison into your adversary's food." But Mr. Grigg writes,* "either the terrors of the Sirkar are not what they were, or this precept is much disregarded, for the Court-house at Ootacamund is constantly thronged with Badagas, and they are now very much given to litigation."

782 I gather from the notes, which Bishop Whitehead has kindly placed at my disposal, that "when the Badagas wish to take a very solemn oath, they go to the temple of Māriamma at Sigūr, and, after bathing in the stream and putting on only one cloth, offer fruits, cocoanuts, etc., and kill a sheep or fowl. They put the head of the animal on the step of the shrine, and make a line on the ground just in front of it. The person who is taking the oath then walks from seven feet off in seven steps, putting one foot immediately in front of the other, up to the line, crosses it, goes inside the shrine, and puts out a lamp that is burning in front of the image. If the oath is true, the man will walk without any difficulty straight to the shrine. But, if the oath is not true, his eyes will be blinded, and he will not be able to walk straight to the shrine, or see the lamp. It is a common saying among Badagas, when a man tells lies, 'Will you go to Sigūr, and take an oath?' Oaths are taken in much the same way at the temple of Māriamma at Ootacamund. When a Hindu gives evidence in the Court at Ootacamund, he is often asked by the Judge whether he will take an oath at the Māriamma temple. If he agrees, he is sent off to the temple with a Court official. The party for whom he gives evidence supplies a goat or sheep, which is killed

* Manual of the Nilagiri district,

1: Thurston & Rangachari I,G-4,5 (no date) 1909
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kallu. There is, further, a platform, made of bricks and mud, called mandhe kallu, whereon the Badagas, when not working, sit at ease. In their folk-tales men seated thereon are made to give information concerning the approach of strangers to the village. Strangers, who are not Badagas, are called Holeya. The Rev. G. Richter gives * Badaga Holeya as a division of the lowly Holeyas, who came to Coorg from the Mysore country. In front of the houses, the operations of drying and threshing grain are carried out. The cattle are kept in stone kraals, or covered sheds close to the habitations, and the litter is kept till it is knee or waist deep, and then carried away as manure for the Badaga's land, or planters' estates.

"Nobody," it has been said, † "can beat the Badaga at making mother earth produce to her utmost capacity, unless it be a Chinese gardener. To-day we see a portion of the hill side covered with rocks and boulders. The Badagas become possessed of this scene of chaos, and turn out into the place in hundreds, reducing it, in a few weeks, to neat order. The unwieldy boulders, having been rolled aside, serve their purpose by being turned into a wall to keep out cattle, etc. The soil is pounded and worried until it becomes amenable to reason, and next we see a green crop running in waves over the surface. The Badagas are the most progressive of all the hill tribes, and always willing to test any new method of cultivation, or new crops brought to their notice by the Nilgiri Horticultural Society."

Writing in 1832, Harkness states ‡ that "on leaving his house in the morning the Burgher pays his adoration

* Manual of Coorg. † Pioneer, 4th October 1907.

‡ Description of a singular Aboriginal Race inhabiting the summit of the Neilgherry Hills.

1: Thurston & Rangachari E,G-4,5 (no date) 1909
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The Badagas live in dread of the Kurumbas, and the Kurumba constantly comes under reference in their folk-stories. The Kurumba is the necromancer of the hills, and believed to be possessed of the power of outraging women, removing their livers, and so causing their death, while the wound heals by magic, so that no trace of the operation is left. He is supposed, too, to have the power of opening the bolts of doors by magic, and effecting an entrance into a house at night for some nefarious purpose. The Toda or Badaga requires the services of the Kurumba, when he fancies that any member of his family is possessed of the devil, or when he wants to remove the evil eye, to which he imagines that his children have been subjected. The Kurumba does his best to remove the malady by repeating various mantrams (magical formulæ). If he fails, and if any suspicion is aroused in the mind of the Toda or Badaga that he is allowing the devil to play his pranks instead of loosing his hold on the supposed victim, woe betide him. The wrath of the entire village, or even the whole tribe, is raised against the unhappy Kurumba. His hut is surrounded at night, and the entire household massacred in cold blood, and their huts set on fire. This is very cleverly carried out, and the isolated position of the Kurumba settlements allows of very little clue for identification. In 1835 no less than fifty-eight Kurumbas were thus murdered, and a smaller number in 1875 and 1882. In 1891 the live inmates of a single hut were murdered, and their hut burnt to ashes, because, it was said, one of them who had been treating a sick Badaga child failed to cure it. The crime was traced to some Kotas in conjunction with Badagas, but the District Judge disbelieved the evidence, and all who were charged were acquitted. Every Badaga family pays an annual

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1; Thurston & Rangachari E,G-4,5 (no date) 1909
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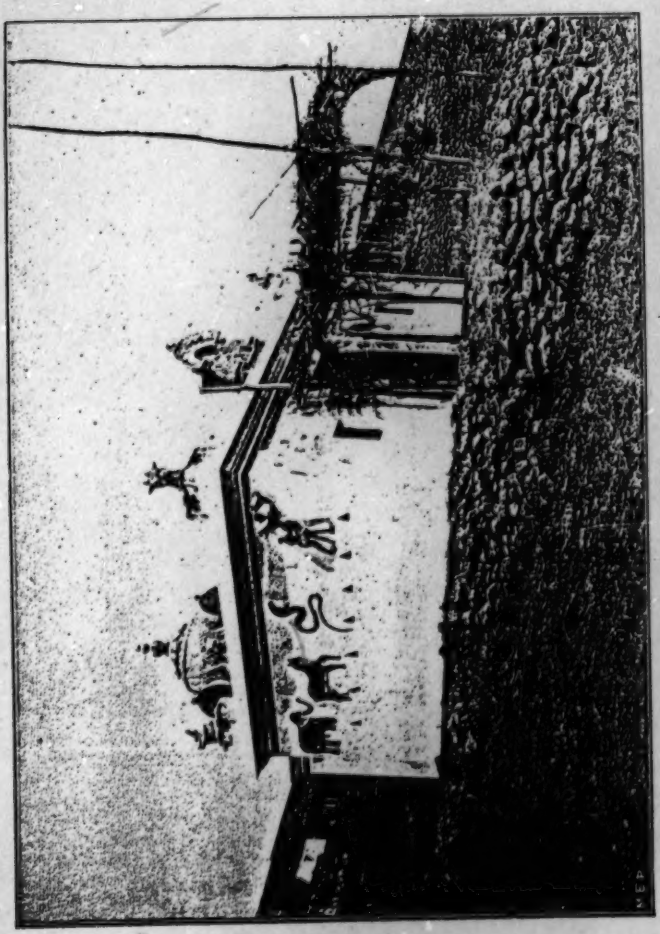

BADAGA TEMPLE.

[facing p. 95]

763 other to fee the guardian of the fairy-like bridge that
(775) spans the dreaded tide. If sense remains to the wretched man, he knows that now his death is nigh. Despair and the gold make recovery impossible, and there are none who have swallowed the Birianhana, and yet have
(775) lived. If insensibility or deathly weakness make it impossible for the coin to pass the thorax, it is carefully bound in cloth, and tied to the right arm, so that there may be nought to hinder the passage of a worthy soul
• (538) into the regions of the blessed." The giving of the coin to the dying man is apparently an important item, and, in the Badaga folk-tales, a man on the point of death is
764 made to ask for a Vīrarāya fanam. When life is extinct, the corpse is kept within the house until the erection of the funeral car (gudikattu) is completed. Though Gover states that the burning must not be delayed more than twenty-four hours, at the present day the Badagas postpone the funeral till all the near relations have assembled, even if this necessitates the keeping of the corpse for two or three days. Cremation may take place on any day,
763 except Tuesday. News of a death is conveyed to distant
177 hamlets (hattis) by a Toreya, who is paid a rupee for his services. On approaching a hamlet, he removes his turban, to signify the nature of his errand, and, standing on the side of a hill, yells out "Dho! Dho! who is in the hamlet"? Having imparted his news, he proceeds on
764 his journey to the next hamlet. On the morning of the day fixed for the funeral, the corpse is taken on a charpoy or native cot to an open space, and a buffalo led thrice round it. The right hand of the corpse is then lifted up, and passed over the horns of the buffalo. A little milk is drawn, and poured into the mouth of the corpse. Prior to this ceremony, two or three buffaloes may be let loose, and one of them captured, after the

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over who is a Badaga and who is not.

The coherence of Badaga society was already a *fait accompli* by 1800, and we know of scarcely any villages founded much after that date. In effect their colonization of the Nilgiris and the consolidation of various refugee groups into a unity were events of what we must academically call prehistory. From the Badagas' point of view, however, the advent of a few foreign literati did not nudge their community from the darkness of prehistory into the gloomy light of historicity. Until today nobody, Badaga or otherwise, has published a history of the community: are they therefore still prehistoric?

Be that as it may, their past is of extreme importance to them, and is still vividly recalled in an oral history of legends that are taken for fact and in most cases probably *are* based on actual events. Badaga legends are highly consistent from one part of the district to another and are sufficiently precise about the more insignificant details to convince me that, like the Maori genealogists of old, Badagas have long maintained a fairly accurate interest in their past and in teaching the young about it. Some of these unwritten legends take the form of epic ballads that are sung throughout the night while waiting for someone to die and in other situations where time has to be killed. This should not deceive us into considering the legends mere entertainment: it is true that they are delightfully entertaining to Badagas, but legends are also crucial to their convictions about how the social system should operate. It is these highly credible tales about who settled which village that explain to all the 120,000 Badagas the regulations governing village exogamy and other aspects of the relation between a kinship system, a pattern of settlement and a social hierarchy.

Instead of relegating Badaga legend to the 'folklore' pigeon-hole in the hope that a content analysis will later be made of it, I propose to examine briefly what the legends do and do not cover in Badaga prehistory. Most of them are tales of supposed events, often mysterious, often tragic, events in the lives of personages who lived on the Nilgiri Hills. Stories of love and magic belong to this group. A second group are the political tales, legends of chieftains and East India Company officials who came to the hills for conquest, plunder or sport. A third group are the local legends of Badaga colonization. These three groups deal with varying aspects of Badaga origins. The tales of personal exploits, often amorous in

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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538 nature, are cited to explain the beginning of particular lineages or villages. The political tales explain the origin of villages and the emergence of various village officials. The accounts of who settled which place now explain the pattern of exogamy within the community. A fourth group of legends embrace all sorts of events and arrangements resulting from Badagas' contact with the Toda, Kota and Kurumba tribes indigenous to the area. These legends validate the whole system of economic interdependence which has held these groups rigidly together for so long and has led to a minimum division of labour within the Badaga community.

193 Here are the quasi-historical events Badagas have chosen to remember. Yet the one great event of their past not clearly recalled now is the actual flight from Mysore. They are explicit that their ancestors did not all come to the Nilgiris at the same time, and yet many nowadays claim they had been refugees fleeing from Tippu Sultan. So vague are people about their ancestors' flight that the only legend I have located on the subject is obviously coloured by a nineteenth-century borrowing from the Book of Exodus. It tells how the Badagas, hotly pursued by Moslem soldiers, came to the Moyar River, the northern limit of the district, at which point the waters opened up and enabled them to pass. As one might guess the pursuers were all drowned when the river closed up again behind the Badagas.

195 While it may be true that the latest arrivals were fleeing from Tippu or the four Mysore Wars, the great bulk of the people were refugees from earlier scourges or were purposely brought to settle the hills. The 370 villages in which they now live were virtually all in existence when the British first settled there a mere twenty years after Tippu's death. By the start of the nineteenth century the Badagas were consolidated as a Nilgiri society and their work of colonization completed.

194 [195] (197) For the early days of their settlement we fortunately have the independent record of an Italian priest who visited the Nilgiris in 1603 and met both Badagas and Todas there. When we couple this fact with the linguistic evidence that Badagas speak an archaic dialect of Kannada, it becomes most likely that the first major wave of refugees arrived as the Moslem hordes were destroying the great Hindu empire of Vijayanagar in Karnataka in 1565. There is no doubt that this was the direction from which the Badagas came. Aside from speaking a dialect of Kannada, their very name means 'northerner', and their adherence to the

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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582 [538] Another factor entering into the choice of a bride is expressed in the proverb, 'Have the girl from a far-away place; have the cow from a nearby place.'[7] It is generally felt that a woman from a distant village who is a classificatory cross-cousin will make the best of wives, for she will not take too many liberties with affines who are not previously well-known to her, and at the same time she will be unable to run home to her parents too often; in short, she is likely to remain in the marital home and work adequately there. An example of an ideal marriage with a classificatory father's sister's daughter is to be seen in Diagram 9 (p. 179) (the man marked X). The principle of 'equivalence' of brothers in this kinship table makes X's wife a cross-cousin to him.

565 [121] In Chapter 10 we will discuss the manner in which the modern Badaga community is becoming a class society. We should nonetheless note here that already by the nineteenth century a class of 'gentry' had arisen in each village. This is the term I have chosen for the families descended from the village founders and including all of the headman. As will be seen, these people had higher social status than others and a peculiar status in Badaga law, to be explored in Chapter 8.

128 The marriage system which now links the forty-four Badaga clans into ten phratries is a very complex one and calls for a clarifying diagram to accompany the following pages of description. Each circle in Diagram 7 represents one clan, and the intervening lines link clans which customarily intermarry. Clans have been grouped into phratries. The dotted lines mark irregular but acceptable patterns of marriage. The subcultural divisions between Lingayats and other Shaivites, between Christians and Shaivites, and between vegetarians and meat-eaters, have also been indicated.

WODEAS

615 [162] The majority of Badagas rank Wodeas as the highest phratry in the community.[8] They occupy twelve villages scattered across the plateau, some very close to the villages of lower phratries. Their villages are not all exogamous. There are perhaps four thousand Wodeas, distributed among three unnamed clans, or six septs. These septs, with their variant names, are as follows:

615 614 612 Clan I: Şu:riya and Selandi (or Sedili) septs;

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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9. See above, pp 166, 168. On the designation of Badagas as a caste, see Hockings, 1968 b, *passim*.

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10. Ward, 1821, lxv; see above, p. 142. Until 1878 the mails were carried by teams of runners; Grigg, 1880, 408.

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11. The district is unusually well endowed in this respect, for it is only the size of Warwickshire or Luxemburg and slightly smaller than Rhode Island State. From Ootacamund some of the major cities of South India are also served: Madurai, Salem, Mysore, Bangalore, Coimbatore, Palghat and Calicut (Kozhikode).

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12. India, 1962, 133; Moses, 1964, 33, found 73% of Badaga males and 50% of females literate ($N = 200$). My sample in 1963 was 420.

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13. There are a few who combine the business trip with a pilgrimage, but this is not usual.

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14. This purposive sample was drawn from 656 interviews in the district.

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15. $Chi^2 = 5.18$, $P < 0.03$. This middle-aged group had grown up during the slump which spanned the 1930s and which is reflected in the low food-grain prices of those years; see Madras, 1965, 37.

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16. *manetana*, literally 'house-stage' or 'house-level'; compare Kannada *manetana*, translated as 'household,' 'race, family' by Kittel, 1894, 1207, the connotation being a family of worthy people.

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17. Grigg, 1880, 366. These were village magistrates and clerks; see above, p. 172.

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18. These social distinctions have over a century of history. They are crystallized in various proverbs as well as being universally recognized normative concepts. One proverb, for example, runs: 'Though it is hot water it will extinguish fire.' This refers to group loyalties: though we may have a friendship with a man of another lineage, village, faction, phratry or community, we will take the side of our own group against his when the need arises. Other proverbs relate to particular social distinctions, e.g., between one village and another:

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'Even if he is headman of his own village, he is not superior to the son of the widow of the last house in another village.'

'If you are not cunning, do not go to Jakkatala; if you are poor, do not go to Ke:ti.'

E.g., between phratries.

'If a crow makes a dropping on you it is a bad sign; if a Ha:ruva shouts at you it is a bad sign.'

E.g., between affines and agnates:

'If brothers curse each other, one can still build his house on his brother's threshold; if in-laws curse, leave and run away.'

'Though she is our sister, is her husband ours?' (In a later work I plan to analyse some 1300 Badaga proverbs).

[p. 238 is blank]

81 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1982 AN50 Badaga AN50

(amongst others) either his FZD or his MBD, but there is a marked preference for a FZD and some good reasons for it.[2] One involves a feeling of status congruence. Men, it is believed, demean themselves somewhat by becoming bride-givers. This is acknowledged nowadays by the payment of dowry, a new custom among the Badagas. But a young man's spiritual guide is not the family priest in this community; instead it is always his MB, whom he calls *guru* and also accords much respect. It is thus incongruent if that particular man should give his daughter in marriage to the very boy he has counselled. Marriage with a FZD, or with the daughter of a MB other than one's *guru*, gets around this emotional problem.

Patrilocality is another preference that is usually spoken of as an unbending rule. Yet there is in point of fact a term, *aḷiya se:tu*, for the live-in son-in-law, a young man who opts to live with his wife's family after their marriage. This is considered an undignified and pitiful thing to do, but it can bring real material advantages to a man whose wife has no brothers, and is a necessary alternative to virilocal residence in such a family. The epic ballad *Ba:la Sevana* deals with a man who moves into his father-in-law's village to help with the buffaloes, leaving his own mother in her village lamenting the loss of her only son, and bemoaning her fate since "there will be nobody to set fire to her corpse." It is interesting to note that Ba:la Sevana married into the Kunda region, one that used to be so economically distressed that its children were often sold into bondage for a period of years, thereby becoming the household servants of Badagas in other parts of the Nilgiris. The live-in son-in-law was one institution that helped make up for the loss of male children in those bad years, when bondage was the only answer to the threat of starvation in that region.

2. Patriliny and Patrilocality

Today the Badagas are successful cash-crop farmers specialising in cabbages, potatoes, and tea; those of the Kunda region are the wealthiest in the District. Until the early part of this century, on the other hand, they were all mainly farmers of millet. This and several other grains, together with dairy produce, provided their subsistence. When one delves further back in their history, to the 17th and 18th centuries when they were already well established on the Nilgiri Hills but with a population of under 2,000, one finds that the Badagas were already millet farmers yet thought of themselves as primarily buffalo herdsmen. This is reflected very clearly in a number of their epic ballads dating from that time. Since each family or lineage used once to have its own herd of buffaloes, then it is legitimate for us to consider

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[2] Letters placed in single apostrophes, 'A', 'B', 'C', etc.; stand for hypothetical people and are like personal names. Letters placed in double quotation marks, e.g. "M," "F," etc., indicate classificatory rather than actual kin relationships, and should be read as "in the category of mothers," and so on. Z = sister, S = son, etc.

9: Natesa Sastri U-5 (no date) 1892
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764 [782] [539] 'May milk increase, money increase, offspring increase, and harvest increase'. The pots are then passed over the fire and thereafter taken to the river. Fresh water is fetched; the paddy is husked and the rice is cooked with salt and plantains without milk. The cooked food is now placed on the four plantain leaves. All bathe as soon as the cocks are heard crowing, worship the *Lińga* or light, as the case may be, and deposit the food spread on the plantain leaves in the *Hâgôṭu*—milk room. All the people assembled stand outside. The eldest member of the village asks the question whether all are in attendance for the occasion—*Ellâru bandiddârâ*. 'Yes' is the reply, when the following prayer is uttered:—

539 [782] [764]

Endunâ dinadu
Naṅga muttavar naṭaku
Bettavar naṭaku
Naṅga Naṭadanu
Hostu haṭadalla
Haṭalu hostalla,
Talai hotta gaṇdilla
Mola hotta heṇṇillâ.
Jâtiki śêrili.
Janaka śêrili kulakke śêrili
Kôvû

which may be freely translated thus:—'We have acted now as our forefathers and the forefathers of those forefathers acted. Neither new nor old rites have we performed now; but only those which were observed from time immemorial. No man or woman lives for ever. May this individual mingle then with his creed and clan and may he live happy in the other world'. All utter this. Then the eldest member eats a handful of rice and the others also do the same in their turn. This eating is called the eating of the *Hiṇḍiya kûṭu*—the tasting of the funeral rice and is considered a great sign of attachment and caste union. He who does not partake of this rice is neither a good friend nor a relation, which fact has been crystallized into a proverb:—

764 [782] [539]

538 [764]

Hiṇḍiya kûṭu timbuvavanô
Setta kula ettuvavana nî endu adkiyu.

'What are you, you fool? Are you one who has partaken of the funeral rice with me, or one who has with me accompanied the dead body!' This is said of one who, without showing in these practical ways the attachment that should exist between relations, pretends

9: Natesa Sastri U-5 (no date) 1892
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538 to be a near relation among the Baḍagas. Thus closes the third
(764) day of the funeral rites of the Baḍagas.

The third day's ceremony is a curious and significant ceremony.
764 The lighting up of the fire inside the house and the handful of straw
brought from the outside thatch to kindle it are nothing but the
(783) simple ways of purifying a polluted house which the high-caste
Hindus employ on various occasions. The wife mourning outside,
while the grain is being turned up in the *Kerachi*, shows her grief
at the idea that her lord had become a spirit among the departed
spirits and that all his connection with this world has entirely
(783) ceased. The passing of the pots over the fire are means adopted
to purify the vessels and the house after the pollution caused by
the death. During the first two days of mourning the milk-
house may not be entered, but on the third day it may be once
more used. There the first rice is spread in order that it may
acquire some of the purity of the spot and it is there that the feast
of friends and relatives is held that is considered to be the most
binding tie and the greatest token of friendship and caste union.

In the case of those who cremate the dead body the ceremony
of the first day is almost the same as with those who bury,
though there are certain differences. Up to the end of the con-
fession the ceremonies are all the same. The car is taken to the
cremation ground where a big fire has been lit and kept ready. At
some little distance from the fire a spot is chosen for cremating the
body, and at the place chosen a pit is dug. The pit is then filled
up with firewood and the body to be cremated is placed over it. It
is covered up with fuel.

When the corpse is placed on the funeral car it is sometimes
placed with the cot also and sometimes without it. When it is
(768) taken to the funeral pile, it is taken also with the cot and some-
(556) times without it; when the former is done the cot also is cremated.
Only well-to-do Baḍagas cremate the cot along with the dead body;
in ninety-nine out of a hundred cases the cot is not cremated.
If it is the body of a female the brother or brothers or some one of
her blood relations tear up into three parts lengthwise a new
cloth six cubits long and tie the pieces round the body in the region
(121) of the heart before placing it on the pile.* It is difficult to get
the meaning of this custom from the Baḍagas, but we may guess

* This is termed *Lêkaṭṭuvadu*, meaning tying up tight.